

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 CAB-09 FAA-00

DOT-00 SY-10 USSS-00 AID-20 A-01 SCA-01 AF-10 ARA-16

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EB - MR. ORTMAN

EUR/WE - MR. MANGER

L/EB - MR. WILLIS

NEA - MR. ATHERTON

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P 182314Z SEP 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 185872

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:ICAO, ETRN, BE

SUBJECT: ROME AIRPORT INCIDENT

REF: BRUSSELS 5259

1. DESPITE RECEPTION GIVEN ISRAELI LETTER (WHICH BOTH
DELEGATION AND DEPARTMENT FORESAW AND CAUTIONED AGAINST,)

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WE CONTINUE TO FEEL MISSILE INCIDENT AT ROME AIRPORT

DESERVES MORE DELIBERATE MENTION IN ICAO AIR SECURITY CONFERENCE THAN IT HAS YET BEEN OPPORTUNE OR PROCEDURALLY POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE. WHILE WE LEAVE TIMING AND CONTEXT IN WHICH REFERENCE MIGHT BE MADE ENTIRELY IN DISCRETION OF US REP, OCCASION SHOULD BE SOUGHT TO DRAW ATTENTION OF FULL MEETING TO MISSILE INCIDENT AND ITS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR SAFETY OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIGHLIGHTED IN SOME ACCEPTABLE CONTEXT IN FORMAL MEETING POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE OR IRRESPONSIBLE STATE ACTIONS IMPLICIT IN STRELA MISSILE CASE.

2. DELEGATION SHOULD CONSULT WITH CANADIAN AND (AT ITS DISCRETION) OTHER DELEGATIONS BEFORE DOING SO. WE BELIEVE ISRAELI INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED BEST AT THIS JUNCTURE IF ISRAELI DELEGATION WOULD REFRAIN TO MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE FROM FURTHER INTERVENTION IN ORDER TO PERMIT OTHERS TO FOCUS CONFERENCE ON THREAT ISSUE UNCLOUDED BY ARAB-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION. DELEGATION SHOULD COORDINATE

INTENDED REMARKS CLOSELY WITH ITALIAN DELEGATION TO ASSURE THAT SUBSTANCE IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE DIRECTED AT DIMENSIONS OF INCIDENT, AND FACT THAT OFFENDERS OBTAINED ACCESS TO SOPHISTICATED MILITARY WEAPONRY, AND IS NOT RPT NOT A CRITICISM OF ITALIAN HANDLING CASE OR DESIGNED TO PUT PRESSURE ON ITALIANS, WHICH OF COURSE AT THIS STAGE WE COULD NOT PREJUDGE.

3. DELEGATION SHOULD STRIVE TO ASSURE STATEMENT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO CONSTRUCTIVE PRESENTATION AT CONFERENCE OF REFERENCES TO EPISODE--SOMETHING WE BELIEVE ISRAELI LETTER DID NOT DO. WE BELIEVE STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTING THIS SERIOUS INCIDENT SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO FOCUS ATTENTION OF CONFERENCE ON NEED FOR ALL STATES TO EXERCISE GREATEST VIGILANCE TO ASSURE THAT POTENTIAL OFFENDERS ARE PREVENTED FROM THEIR INTENDED MISDEEDS.

4. FOR BRUSSELS. WE UNDERSTAND EC-9 HAVE CONSULTED IN ROME ABOUT MISSILE INCIDENT IN CONTEXT OF ICAO AIR SECURITY CONFERENCE, AND ON SEPTEMBER 10 ISRAELI DELEGATION
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INDEPENDENTLY CIRCULATED ACCOUNT OF INCIDENT AS ISRAEL SEES IT (SPARKING SHARP ARAB-ISRAELI EXCHANGES). BELGIUM HAS NOT PURSUED MATTER FURTHER IN MEETING, AND WE BELIEVE BELGIAN DELEGATION IS FAMILIAR WITH OUR THINKING FROM CONTACTS THERE ABOUT TACTICAL PROBLEMS WE SAW. THESE WERE ELABORATED UPON IN ROME 9372, STATE 179709 AND STATE 180742 (ALL BEING REPEATED BRUSSELS) UPON WHICH EMBASSY MAY DRAW AT ITS DISCRETION IN ANY FURTHER CONVERSATION

WITH FONOFF ON ICAO ASPECTS. UK APPARENTLY HAS REACTED
ALONG SIMILAR LINES. LONDON 10497 ALSO BEING REPEATED
FOR EMBASSY'S BACKGROUND.

5. WE HAD EXPLAINED TO SOVIETS BEFORE INCIDENT OCCURRED
OUR CONSIDERABLE CONCERN THAT STRELA MISSILES MIGHT FALL
INTO HANDS OF IRRESPONSIBLE PARTIES, AND WE MAY WISH TO
PURSUE THIS WITH SOVIET EMBASSY HERE. WE WOULD WELCOME
SIMILAR REMONSTRATION BY BELGIAN AUTHORITIES. RUSH

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